

Report on the Technical Assistance Visit to REACH Institute for School Leadership

April 2010

Overview of this Report

This agenda item provides a summary of the Technical Assistance visit to the Reach Institute for School Leadership (REACH) in Oakland, California.

Staff Recommendation

This is an information item.

Background

New institutions, upon approval of their initial educator preparation programs, are assigned to one of the seven accreditation cohorts. In order to provide feedback to the new sponsors on their program implementation to date, and to report to the COA on the progress of the programs, Technical Assistance visits are provided two years prior to the scheduled accreditation site visit. Technical Assistance visits that have/will be conducted for 2009-10 include the following institutions: Santa Barbara County Education Office, Oakland Unified Intern Program, REACH, Standards Aligned Instructional Leadership (SAIL), and the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA). This item reports on the technical assistance visit to the REACH Institute for School Leadership.

In 2008, the REACH Teacher Credential Program was established by the Bay Area School of Enterprise (BASE), a public charter high school (Alameda Unified School District) and the REACH Institute for School Leadership, a public benefit corporation. The REACH credential programs are a consortium of independent Local Education Agencies including charter schools and school districts. The REACH credential program consortia has contracted with the REACH Institute for School Leadership to design, administer, evaluate, and report on the REACH credential programs. Currently, the REACH credential programs include the REACH Intern Program for both Multiple and Single Subject credentials and the REACH Teacher Induction Program. The technical assistance visit focused only on the Preliminary credential programs.

The technical assistance visit took place on March 22-23, 2010. The program personnel were well prepared for the visit. The CTC staff and one member of the BIR followed many of the procedures that are used in a traditional accreditation site visit. The major difference was that no standard findings were decided by the team and no accreditation recommendation was considered. Rather, the team provided formative feedback to the institution about the adequacy of evidence provided to demonstrate that all standards were being addressed by the program.

The first day of the visit consisted of an orientation to the program by the program's management team. Program leadership provided an excellent summary of the overall objectives of the program, their own assessment of their programs' current strengths, and the areas they have identified as areas in need of additional attention and growth. This orientation was followed by back to back interviews with stakeholders. Because the program is very small, the

number of those interviewed was also small. However, all representative stakeholders were present and interviewed including program leadership, school principals, candidates, graduates, and advisory panel members. Key personnel who serve as coaches, instructional personnel, and field supervisors were also interviewed. The review team met over dinner and into the evening to discuss the various aspects of the program and their alignment with the standards. The second day consisted of an early morning meeting with the program director to clarify reviewers' understanding of the program operations and to ask further questions about some of the issues raised in the stakeholder interviews and a few additional interviews with individuals who were not available the first day. A written report was provided to and discussed with program personnel at an exit meeting.

In general, based upon the evidence reviewed over the course of the two days, the program appears to be well managed and no major concerns were discovered. Some areas of potential growth or improvement were discussed by the review team, several of which had been identified by the program personnel during the orientation on the first day of the visit. Some follow up strategies were identified and discussed, particularly as it relates to candidate assessment data and unit assessment.

This particular credential program is unique in that the consortium of charter schools that participate, all in the East Bay or in the San Jose area, are distinct in many ways from one another such as in the curriculum used and educational philosophy that undergird their core beliefs. The REACH credential program must ensure that the unique needs of those schools it serves are addressed, while also ensuring their credential candidates are prepared to teach in any public school in California. This has resulted in a highly personalized program where program personnel work closely with each and every school principal in the consortium and with each credential candidate.

Feedback was well received by the program personnel. Personnel expressed gratitude at having the opportunity for reviewers to examine their program prior to a formal site visit. They commented that they valued the constructive comments by the reviewers about program operations as it relates to the standards, documentation, and expectations at a formal accreditation site visit.